

## BENSON SLASHER OF NAVY'S AERO BUDGET

**Time Enough to Get Ready  
When War Comes. View  
of Rear Admiral.**

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Washington, March 16.—Rear Admiral W. S. Benson, chief of naval operations, asserted responsibility today for the slashing of appropriations for the aeronautic corps of \$11,000,000 from the \$20,000,000 before the House Naval Affairs Committee.

When the question of naval preparedness was under consideration at the meeting of the committee, Mr. Bristol, director of the office of naval aeronautics, proposed an expenditure of \$13,000,000 to bring the branch up to an adequate basis. This figure was reduced to \$10,000,000 by the general Board of the navy cut down to \$5,000,000. When the estimates were sent to Congress they called for only \$2,000,000.

Explaining why he suggested

reduction to Secretary Daniels. Admiral Benson told the committee that many persons had been too much impressed by the experience of the belligerent countries in Europe.

"As an adviser to the Secretary of the Navy," he said, "I consider it my duty to consider the whole field, in considering the question of additional appropriations I think we should determine on a line of policy and get a standard type of aeroplane.

**He Assumes Responsibility.**

"If it should become necessary to prepare quickly for war Congress would have to be called and would be in session to give us whatever money may be necessary. Influenced by that idea my advice to the Secretary has been shaped along these lines. I am now prepared to take the consequences. This advice as to air craft was made upon my own study and thought and not upon any suggestion from the General Board."

sets questioned Admiral Benson's estimate on the subject of aeronautics, pointing to the experience of England.

"Wouldn't the air force," he suggested, "demonstrate that if we are to do anything we should do it right away?"

"We have made a good start," announced Admiral Benson. "We should keep our training schools going and develop the operation of aircraft as soon as possible. It is of such importance that all our energies should be directed along that line, but our situation is decidedly different from that of England. I

Admiral Benson explained that the greatest difficulty lies in developing a satisfactory engine. Experiments carried on at the Washington navy yard, he said, with a 250 horse-power engine have reached a point where success

**Wants Independent Corps.**

"Of what size should the aviation corps be?" he was asked by Representative Butler.

"From 200 to 400 enlisted men and 100 officers,"

Admiral Benson told the committee that the navy now has only sixteen airplanes, two of which have a flight capacity of only four hours, and the other

slightly more than two hours. Port engine machines have been ordered. In addition to these, he said, others should be ordered as fast as ships can be prepared for them.

His replies disclosed the fact that the navy has no aeroplane with an engine exceeding 160 horse-power. Admiral Benson said that he believed European countries are using machines with engines developing more than 200 horse-power.

He also approved a suggestion that

the Chief of Naval Operations should have the rank of Admiral, and advise the committee that the navy would require 2,631 auxiliary vessels of all types in case of war, including oilers, miners, sweepers and small boats and that between 200 and 300 large vessels would be needed in case of an extensive campaign.

to the Chamber of Commerce for assistance in a fly swatting contest, asking that prizes be offered to encourage children. Last spring 19,019 flies were killed in Houk's school building.

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